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ABSTRACT

Leading educational reformers have recently contended that students in U.S. secondary schools rarely are challenged to use their minds in any meaningful way. Faced with the remarkable absence of classroom thoughtfulness in U.S. schools, educational reformers have suggested that major organizational changes are necessary to improve the emphasis on higher order thinking in schools. This paper elaborates on a previous research study in which the relationship between organizational features and the promotion of classroom thoughtfulness by studying social studies departments in 16 secondary schools were investigated. Four departments, in contrast to the other 12, made structural changes in school organization. The purpose of the study was to gain more detailed knowledge of how organizational features were associated with the departments' level of classroom thoughtfulness. Teachers, department heads, students, and principals were interviewed and five social studies classes at each school were observed a minimum of five times during two-week long visits. Innovative organizational structures are not associated with higher levels of classroom thoughtfulness. A focus upon organizational programs might be more fruitful to classroom thoughtfulness than restructuring efforts. An appendix that lists minimal criteria for classroom thoughtfulness, a table presenting statistical data, and a list of references are included. (DB)

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Restructuring Secondary Social Studies: The Association of Organizational Features and Classroom Thoughtfulness

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Restructuring Secondary Social Studies:

The Association of Organizational Features and Classroom Thoughtfulness

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Students in US secondary schools are rarely challenged to use their minds in any meaningful way (see, e.g., Goodlad, 1984; Newmann, 1990c). Indeed, "much classroom activity is nonsensical or mindless" (Newmann, 1990a, p. 44). Faced with the remarkable absence of thoughtfulness in US classrooms, educational reformers have suggested that major organizational changes are necessary to improve the emphasis on higher order thinking in schools (e.g., Sizer, 1984; Lewis, 1989). That is, reformers argue that innovative organizational structures are needed to assist teachers in their efforts to improve the thoughtfulness of classroom practice.

To investigate the relationship between organizational features and the promotion of classroom thoughtfulness, we studied social studies departments in 16 secondary schools. That analysis (Ladwig, 1991) showed structural characteristics held no consistent relationships with classroom practice across the whole sample, but some of the evidence suggested that within specific contexts organizational structures did influence classroom thoughtfulness. Here, we present a more in-depth analysis by concentrating on the four departments which, in constrast to the other 12, had made structural changes in school organization.[1] Our purpose is to gain more detailed knowledge of **how** organizational

features were associated with the departments' level of classroom thoughtfulness. The small sample size, of coure, limited our view. We could not examine the broad range of way in which organizational features might support or impede instruction. But the detailed study of four departments allowed us illuminate some possibilities. Though focused on one pedagogical goal (i.e., classroom thoughtfulness), we believe this analysis has implications for restructuring efforts intended to alter a wider range of instructional practices.

We begin with a distinction between organizational structures and programmatic efforts. Both are seen as "organizational features."[2] Conditions such as the length and scheduling of classes, the amount of planning time available to teachers, the formation of teaching teams, the number of students in a class and the total number of students per teacher are considered to be organizational structures. Distinct from these structural conditions, programmatic efforts such as curriculum development for the promotion of students' thinking, peer observations and demonstration teaching to improve pedagogy, and efforts to enhance collegiality and a common departmental or school vision can also be examined. The central question here is, "How did organizational structures and programmatic efforts appear to influence classroom thoughtfulness in departments that had 'restructured'?"

Design Overview

In addition to interviews with teachers, department heads, students, and principals, 5 social studies classes at each school were observed a minimum of 5 times during two

week-long visits. Each class was rated on 13 different 5-point dimensions, of which six were identified as constitutive of classroom thoughtfulness (see appendix and Newmann, 1990 a&b).

Scores for individual lessons (CHOT, or Class Higher Order Thinking score) are an average of the ratings on these six different dimensions. Department scores reported below (and in Table 1) represent an average of the lesson CHOT scores. This departmental score is called the HOTAV (Higher Order Thinking departmental AVerage) score. HOTAV scores were computed as the mean of 18 observed lessons in each department. These consisted of four randomly selected lessons from each of three primary teachers. The six remaining CHOT scores were selected randomly from at least two additional teachers in the department.

In what follows, we will describe, for these four restructured social studies departments, the innovative organizational structures and the extent to which programmatic efforts to foster classroom thoughtfulness were utilized to take advantage of these structures. The departments will be discussed in order from the lowest to the highest on mean HOTAV scores of classroom thoughtfulness.[3]

Shaw

Of the four restructured schools, Shaw High School received the lowest ratings on our measures of classroom thoughtfulness. Shaw's HOTAV score (3.35), when compared to seven representative departments studied in year 2, was slightly more than half a standard deviation above the representative mean (see Table I). Despite its above

average departmental score, we shall argue that changes in organizational structures at Shaw did not appear to offer any consistent benefit for the promotion of classroom thoughtfulness.

Restructuring at Shaw occurred primarily within individual courses. Two department courses, American Experience and Global Studies, were taught by social studies teachers who were each paired with one teacher from the English department. Students were scheduled for these classes in two consecutive periods. Teachers had two hours of planning time each day, one of which was a common team prep period with their teammate. The common planning time was intended, by the two department heads, to facilitate thematic curriculum integration for these courses. However, these teams did not always function as intended. One of these teams could be described as entirely dysfunctional. The teachers on this team held strongly divergent views on basic curricular aims and never came to an agreement on what the American Experience course was about. As the social studies teacher put it at the end of the year, "We just have totally different ideas on what they (the students) should do and how they should do it and what we expect them to get from it."

Three other social studies courses, one at the 9th, 10th, and 11th grade level, were reorganized into teaching teams comprised of one English, social studies, and reading teacher. These courses comprised the Humanities program for low achieving students. These teaching teams also had 2 hours of prep each day with one hour of common planning time.

One of the Humanities social studies teachers reported that the reading teacher in

her team reinforced what she emphasized in social studies. At the same time, however on quantitative questionnaire items, she indicated that she had complete individual control over the materials, content, skills, and techniques she used in class. Beyond a general commitment to the success of their low achieving students, we found nothing to suggest that her team shared a commitment to any substantive goals. This teacher specifically stated that higher order thinking was not a stated goal of her Humanities team.

A staff member from another Humanities team reported that he did receive collegial assistance from one of his teammates. Specifically, the Reading teacher would help him to develop discussion questions for which students could more clearly perceive the focus and intent, rather than broad and typically vague questions. In his own words, "I can ask my 'dumb' question and she can say, 'How about a little focus here,' because I have a tendency to ask global questions." In an interview with this team, many examples were given of this kind of interaction which reportedly occurred both as part of peer observations and team planning. Even with this collegial effort, examples of this teacher's more focused questions did not exhibit characteristics that would tend to challenge students to think beyond factual recall of information.

In the Humanities program, social studies class sizes were small (mean, 10.5 students). Consequently, the two Humanities social studies teachers we interviewed reported low total numbers of students (60 and 80). This component of restructuring at Shaw, however, was not associated with improved levels of classroom thoughtfulness for these classes (mean CHOT score for Humanities courses, 2.82). Class observations

revealed a predominance of traditional instruction: lecture and recitation, and individual student worksheets. One of the teachers reported that she viewed the reduction in her student load as a way to help students complete assignments during class. The nature of these assignments were not altered to promote higher order thinking.

Teaching teams for individual courses and lower track students at Shaw have certainly brought increased opportunities for collaboration and collegial support. These restructuring efforts, however, were not combined with any programmatic attempts to generate improved attention to the goal of higher order thinking. This was exhibited in the continued commitment to content coverage of most of Shaw's social studies teachers. As one put it, "I process everything; so there's a need for me to take care of all 600 pages. I will take care of all 600 pages. But, it's easier the way we're set up for me to take care of all 600 pages." The team approach, for this teacher, allowed further content coverage. There were no efforts by school or department leadership to try to arrange for common preparation periods within social studies. In addition, although the department chair had 4 free class periods per day and observed teachers for evaluation purposes, he offered little pedagogical assistance to teachers. The department had approximately $8500 per year in discretionary funds, but there were no staff development efforts that encouraged departmental commitment to the goal of promoting students' thinking.

As suggested by more than one of the staff, the department here operated under a "star system" in which some teachers viewed themselves as exemplary and not in need of help from colleagues. The department chair stated, "We have a star system in which everyone gets to shine... When you ask questions on consensus, it's sort of funny because

the department truly has its conservatives and truly has its liberals and truly has its fence-sitters." This was associated with a climate of territorial individualism in which teachers protect their own space by avoiding attempts to arrive at a consensus. Thus, careful attention to substantive issues of teaching thinking was not found in this department. As one social studies teacher stated, "On the subject of more collegiality, I actually doubt how many teachers really want more interaction -- they're set in their ways and may not want to give up a prep period." Another stated, "Basically, we're a set of individuals, not a group. We really don't communicate."

Shaw's social studies teachers exhibited high variation (SD = .78) among teachers' individual mean scores on classroom thoughtfulness (CHOT scores). In spite of restructuring individual courses to improve the quality of instruction for low and middle achieving students, the individualistic culture at Shaw buttressed the uneven distribution of classroom thoughtfulness. This high degree of variation created unequal opportunity between classes of different ability and racial composition.

The Humanities program served low achieving students. As shown by CHOT scores for these classes (mean, 2.82), this restructuring effort failed to provide the experience of more thoughtful classrooms to these students. In contrast, the Modern European History advanced placement class we observed at Shaw scored much higher on classroom thoughtfulness (mean score, 4.26). This was consistent with the finding, across 287 lessons in 16 schools, that the ability level of the class had a sizeable association with lesson thoughtfulness. Such disparity by ability need not be the case, however (see Newmann, 1990c, for further discussion). Shaw's overall department mean score was

directly attributable to the high levels of thoughtfulness exhibited in Shaw's 12th grade Modern European History advanced placement course. Excluding the mean scores of this class, Shaw's departmental HOTAV score would have been 3.09, slightly below the mean for the representative schools.

At Shaw, where 100% of the students in the observed Humanities classes were African American, 86% of the students in the AP class were white. In the mid-level classes, Global Studies and American Experience, 48% of the students were black and 48% were white. Part of the department's efforts were intended to confront the problems of perceived low aspirations among black students and the segregation of students by race. As the department chair suggested, "The black on black pressure in this school not to excel is phenomenal. It's seen as white, and to me it's not white; it's being a student in the school... The vast majority of kids (in his AP class) don't even belong in that class. They fled the mainstream (mid-level) classes, ... they don't want to be with other (black) kids. We allow choice, but I can understand that white flight is very real." In spite of teachers apparent commitment to black students, the actual opportunities for classroom thoughtfulness were largely limited to white students. Within the context of a school with strong racial differentiations, the association between levels of classroom thoughtfulness and race signified one of the persistent problems of educational inequity, i.e., profound differences in learning opportunities by race (see, e.g., Oakes, 1985).

In spite of the many opportunities created by innovative structural changes, Shaw's social studies department's lack of common goals, fragmented and content-driven

curriculum development, and minimal focus on instruction left the promise of restructuring unfulfilled.

Nelson

Nelson High School's social studies department fared only slightly better than Shaw on the measures of classroom thoughtfulness. The departmental mean was 3.36 (sd = .90). How were organizational features associated with these results?

Nelson created a program with innovative organizational features within the traditionally structured school, based on a school-within-a-school model. The program is affiliated a nationwide school improvement effort, the "Federation of Schools," that focuses in part on organizational restructuring. During the year of our research, this program served about one-quarter of the total student body at Nelson. Teaching teams were formed at each grade level: one English, one social studies teacher for grades 10, 11, and 12, and one social studies, one science teacher for grade 9. Students were scheduled for these subjects in two-period blocks. Teachers in the Federation program were entitled to two preparation periods per day, one of which was for team planning. Federation teachers also met together, along with the program coordinator, for an hour every other week. A steering committee, made up of Federation teachers, other interested teachers, parents, and representatives from the guidance department and the school administration, determined policy for the program, subject to district approval. During the year of our research, the staff had the additional responsibilities of preparing for the next school year during which the whole school was to embrace the program's

restructuring efforts and of encouraging and assisting other schools in the district to adopt the Federation structure.

All the teachers interviewed suggested that challenging students to think was an instructional goal all or most of the time. While they expressed a commitment to general program goals which would be consistent with efforts to promote higher order thinking, this was undermined by an inconsistent set of more specific goals. Only one suggested that teaching reasoning was more important than covering content, and four of the five placed as much importance on exposing students to subject matter as they did on developing students' thought and reasoning processes. In addition, all of the respondents suggested that exposing students to a wide range of topics was equally important as exploring with students a narrow range of topics in greater depth. Class observations also revealed that superficial coverage of many topics occurred just as often as sustained examination of fewer topics (mean 3.0, scale 1).

One of the U.S. History teachers was an exception here. He consistently scored high on the depth scale (mean 4.0). This emphasis was further exemplified in his decision to begin his course next year with the Civil War instead of the Colonial period. Although his decision reflected an explicit attempt to reduce the amount of content topics to encourage more depth of understanding, a change which could be associated with higher levels of classroom thoughtfulness, the emphasis on depth was not shared across the teams.

This lack of departmental consensus on specific goals was evident. None of the teachers interviewed identified promoting students' thinking among the goals they felt the

department commonly shared. The social studies department chair recognized this concern when she stated, "What could be better is if we got all the Federation teams (9-12) and agree to stress certain things... We all share the broad goals but we need to know what all teams are doing." Little or no commonality existed between these teachers' self-expressed common department goals. Among the vast array of ostensibly shared goals identified by individual teachers at Nelson were: teaching students to be ethical and law-abiding, promoting students self-esteem, covering content knowledge, promoting active citizenship, or "none." This lack of clear departmental focus is consistent with the high variation among observational ratings of classroom thoughtfulness (sd = .90).

Overcoming curriculum fragmentation by integrating English or science with social studies met with little success as well. Teams at Nelson concentrated on a chronological parallel between English and social studies classes; that is, classes covered the same historical period at roughly the same time, but there was little thematic integration between literature and history. Our only evidence of curriculum integration on the 9th grade team was matching geographical features with relevant geological information. Team members worked together to develop this parallel curricula and agreed to hold seminars (whole class discussions) at least once per week, an effort supported by Federation staff development work. In general, however, Federation staff planned for and taught their courses as their individual domain.

There was also little evidence that the additional time for preparation and team planing was used to develop an improved focus on higher order thinking. In fact, the

extra period for team planning was used infrequently. One of the 11th grade US History teachers reported that she and her English teammate met only once or twice per week to discuss their courses. During this time, they worked out a curriculum plan for a nine week (one quarter) period, and discussed how the social studies and English curricula "dovetail." They also discussed individual student progress and how they might help particular students who may have been experiencing some problems. Another teacher confirmed that team meetings focused "more on the nuts and bolts ... and we talk a lot about students since we share those students." Referring to planning for a year long course, another stated, "My partner and I spent a whole (release) day planning for our Federation courses." Conversations with these teachers suggested they believed that team curriculum development and coordination required very little time.

Thus we found little time was evoted to an explicit focus on the goals of each team's curriculum or on pedagogy that might be associated with attempts to enhance students' thinking, two important programmatic efforts at the three top scoring schools in the overall sample (see King, 1991; Ladwig, 1991). Interestingly, two of the Federation social studies teachers at Nelson gave up one of their prep periods to teach a sixth class and a third used his additional prep period to coach "Academic Athletics."

The bi-weekly Federation staff meeting, according to the program coordinator, was initially intended to be an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their pedagogy and get assistance with the teaching of, among other things, critical thinking. This reportedly occurred only at their first meeting of the year. The program coordinator was aware that a focus on pedagogy did not occur in team planning periods either; this was confirmed in

our interviews with teachers. For the coordinator, this reflected a complacency on the part of the Federation staff and the need for leadership to help them focus on their goals for instruction.

Because restructuring at Nelson involves teaming of colleagues who remain members of different subject departments, leadership roles were problematic. Traditional subject area (e.g., social studies) department chairs were faced with the question of whether to restrict their efforts within the department or to expand them to include the inter-disciplinary teams. The general question faced by Federation leaders was, who should assist the teams to work toward some common educational purpose that would transcend departmental goals? The social studies department chair decided to focus her efforts within the department and tried only to be supportive and a source of encouragement to her teachers. This leadership style led to infrequent department meetings, which for most teachers were merely a formality. The Federation Coordinator could have conceivably taken on this leadership role, but she concentrated her efforts on outreach to other district schools with the goal of making the restructuring at Nelson "transportable" to these other schools. Hence, while a need for intra-departmental leadership was acknowledged by most of the Federation personnel, Nelson was left with a leadership vacuum within the Federation program. No one provided consistent leadership toward substantive programmatic emphases for the teams to address.

Nelson's restructuring efforts also appeared to be significantly hampered by the program's location within a traditionally structured high school. For example, Nelson did not reduce the total number of students per teacher. The average load was 126 students

even though the Federation of Schools is committed in principle to reducing the overall teacher/student ratio. Also, Federation teachers taught courses in the regular school program and all social studies courses were expected to meet district discipline-based curricula guidelines. This points up one of the problems with restructuring a school-within-a-school. Without a total school or district commitment to restructuring, substantial structural constraints remain.

To summarize, Nelson's organizational changes were associated with only slightly higher than average ratings of classroom thoughtfulness (compared to the representative sample). General program goals rather than substantive instructional goals, a lack of departmental and team instructional leadership, and the limitations of their context within a traditionally structured school seem to be factors which mitigated their success.

Carter

Observed classes at Carter Secondary School received a mean score on classroom thoughtfulness of 3.56 (sd = .51). Unlike Shaw and Nelson, specific organizational changes seemed to be associated with Carter's relative success.

Carter was structurally innovative in both their schedule and the grouping of students. Classes met for 2 hours each day. Three divisions within the school combined grades 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, with a common, integrated Humanities and Math/Science curriculum across classes within each division. The 4-5 Humanities teachers in each division comprised teaching teams that met one full morning each week to plan curriculum. The teams also worked together informally throughout each day. Teachers

taught 2 classes per day with reduced student loads. Students took two classes and attended an advisory period each day. In addition they satisfied a four hour block of weekly community service. The third division, for 11th and 12th graders, had additional changes such as alternative scheduling and off-campus classes which were intended to better serve students in their transition to post-secondary experiences. Weekly staff meetings and occasional staff retreats were scheduled to facilitate faculty governance of the school and professional development for its teachers. Carter also belonged to the Federation of Schools.

Teams at Carter devoted significant time to creating an integrated Humanities curriculum. Because they integrated substantive themes and content from English and social studies, teachers planned and taught, to some degree, outside of their subject matter specialty. One staff member stated that this change created the challenge of learning to teach writing. He commented, "I was trained to teach social studies. Here I have to teach something completely new. Teaching kids to write still makes me uncomfortable.... But right now, I try to use that discomfort to my advantage. I can admit that to the kids." It seemed that the interdisciplinary approach might have encouraged teachers to model certain thoughtful behaviors in their classes: to be continually learning themselves, to acknowledge the difficulty of gaining a definitive understanding of a topic, and to consider alternative solutions and reasons to challenging tasks.

Carter High School did not increase teachers' planning time, but to increase teacher collaboration and involvement, they reorganized it. While students were involved

in community service, teachers shared a four hour block of time each week during which they meet in their divisional teams. How did they use this unique time?

All of the staff we talked to at Carter confirmed that the vast majority of this time was spent developing curriculum. An integrated, inter-disciplinary curriculum required a significant amount of curriculum development. Since each division had to reach consensus on the topics and material to be included, this was a time-consuming and arduous task. But they all also agreed that this approach was valuable. As one teacher put it, "My team decided last year to teach Daughter of Ham, which I hated.... You do have to compromise. I'd much rather teach something I wasn't that in love with for the trade-off of being involved in the decision. The curriculum is much richer as well. And I'm being stretched; if I'm being stretched, the kids will be too... You're not giving up control, you're sharing it. And the kids share it too --making decisions, making choices, making evaluations." The team planning concept employed at Carter presented some conflicts, however. Another teacher, having recently transferred from a position in a private school where they "trusted you to teach alone," suggested that team planning involved a degree of coercion when he was not in agreement with colleagues.

One of the explicitly accepted goals of Carter's staff was to foster students' intellectual dispositions. To address this goal, part of the task of the team curriculum planning sessions was to develop fundamental questions for units and topics that would be taught. For example, the year's 9th and 10th graders were studying "Justice." The central questions to be pursued during the first trimester included: What is justice? What is the relationship between truth and justice? How and why do law and morality

change? This programmatic focus on thinking was probably a key factor in Carter's relative success on our measures of thoughtful classroom practice. The focus on intellectual dispositions and fundamental curricular questions reflected a common purpose that unified the teams. Thus, in contrast to Nelson, the restructuring of traditional subject matter departments into interdisciplinary teams did not prohibit teachers at Carter from generating a commitment to a concrete conceptualization of thoughtful curriculum.

Having developed challenging questions for unit topics, the staff devoted most of the team planning time to building the curriculum. There was little time for discussion of how to teach the curriculum in ways that promote thoughtfulness. As one teacher put it, "We spend so much time discussing what to teach in the curriculum that we don't really confront intellectual dispositions and how to nurture them with specific pedagogy." Thus, despite a shared goal centered on thinking, the staff at Carter were unable to develop the focused attention on both curriculum and pedagogy that has been associated with enhanced classroom thoughtfulness.

Carter High School restructured their schedule such that each class met daily for a 2 hour block of time. All 5 of the teachers we interviewed believed that this structural change contributed positively to their efforts to promote higher order thinking. As one stated, "The 2 hour block allows for in-depth discussions, allows students to be involved in research in the room, allows me to let them work independently while I can still get around and see them all, allows me to get to know something about their individual learning styles."

Of the four schools, the most significant change in total student load occurred at Carter. Teachers reported a total average of 33 students for their 2 subject area classes, with a range of 30 to 36 (teachers are responsible for approximately 15 more students for advisory). Most students also stayed with the same subject area teacher for a two year period. The reduced student load allowed teachers to give more detailed feedback on written work and to encourage multiple drafts for these assignments. Classroom observations at Carter revealed significant amounts of one-on-one work between teacher and student as well as peer editing of written work and multiple revisions of individual essays and assignments.[4] Teachers agreed that low student to teacher ratio, combined with the 2 hour long classes, contributed positively to their efforts to challenge students' thinking.

In sum, unique organizational structures at Carter were combined with a programmatic emphasis on developing students' thinking. Both the principal and the Humanities Coordinator attempted to stimulate a thoughtful environment where criticism was acceptable and where teachers were engaged in thinking about provocative educational issues. These factors seemed to have contributed to the school's relative success in promoting classroom thoughtfulness. Reduced student load and the integrated Humanities classes were two structural changes which teachers here believed to have helped them the most in their efforts to teach thinking.

Carter's structural changes and strong programmatic emphases, then, were associated with their higher levels of classroom thoughtfulness. However, Carter's focus on particular organizational features, such as developing an integrated curriculum,

occupied much of the staff's attention and may have prohibited them from looking more critically at specific issues of teaching thinking. The importance of a specific concern with instruction appeared in the highest scoring restructured department.

Williams

Williams' social studies department received the highest ratings of classroom thoughtfulness among our four restructured departments (mean, 3.72; sd = .68). It is at Williams that we found the strongest association between specific organizational structures and relatively high levels of classroom thoughtfulness.

Williams began 20 years ago as the second high school in an expanding district. The decision, with active support of some of the current faculty, was made to adopt flexible-modular scheduling for the new school. The flex-mod schedule has been maintained since its inception. At the time of our research, students met twice per week in large group (approximately 150 students) classes for 55 minutes, once a week in medium group (60 students or less) for 55 minutes, and two or three times per week in small group (12-20 students) classes for 35 minutes. "Open labs" were also available for students to receive additional help and make up or revise assignments. In the social studies department, most of the staff were divided into grade level teams (for 9th, 10th, and 11th grades) of three or four teachers per team. Common prep periods, shared offices, and flexible teaching time were employed for each team. Basic level small group classes, for students more than two years behind in reading, were taught by two teachers. "A-level" seminars were designed for students wishing to receive an A for their course.

Students participating in these A-level seminars were responsible for additional readings and assignments.

At Williams, the teams were organized according to grade levels. The 9th, 10th, and 11th grade teachers reported that they worked together on curriculum development and evaluation, and the spontaneous sharing of instructional ideas. Perhaps associated with the fact that teaching teams were organized by grade levels, there was little sense of identity **as a department**. Teachers suggested that there was, to some degree, an identity and a shared sense of purpose within teams but not within the department as a whole. As one 11th grade World History teachers stated, "There is really no departmental focus on a set of objectives. I really don't know what US History I and II teams (9th and 10th grade) try to emphasize." This points up one of the problems with the grade level team approach within a subject matter department. While it may have enhanced collegial interaction among a group of social studies teachers, it also tended to maintain fragmentation and isolation between teachers, inhibiting a commitment to a common departmental vision.

At Williams, teachers officially had about 5 hours per week of prep time which is typical in US high schools. But given the flex-mod scheduling, they in fact had significantly more opportunity to plan or undertake other professional tasks. That is, during large group lectures, middle groups and Open Labs, some team members did not have direct teaching responsibilities. Ninth, 10th, and 11th grade teams used some of this time to review and develop curriculum, discuss students, and evaluate units that were taught. Some of the teachers reported focusing on the types of questions to be asked in

small group sections, but other than this, they did not appear to have a consistent focus on curriculum or pedagogy for promoting students' thinking.

The small group classes, meeting two or three times per week, was intended explicitly to shift the instructional emphasis from knowledge dissemination to discussion. Four of the five teachers we interviewed stated that the scheduling of small groups was one of the most helpful organizational changes in their efforts to promote higher order thinking. They seemed to share the assumption that class discussion necessarily entails higher order thinking. This was perhaps best expressed by one teacher, who said, "When you walk into a class of 15, you know it's going to be a discussion."

Even though total student load had not been reduced significantly at Williams (average 117.2), small group classes averaged just over 14 students. One teacher commented that the smaller size allowed him to get all students involved and helped to reduce discipline problems. For another teacher, the small group provided an atmosphere which facilitated discussion: "There is a real relaxed atmosphere with the students. You can't have that with a class of thirty -- you just can't... My point is that, when you get things a little more informal, it is easier to get the kids to express themselves and that means that you are using discussion as your medium to start thinking at a higher level." A third summarized well the benefits of small classes, "It allows time to explore ideas with one or a few students without others just sitting around on hold. It reduces dramatically time spent on discipline (and) establishes informal rapport without teacher-student roles."

While it was clear that the small group organization was equated with an accepted

norm of conducting discussions, and discussion was believed to promote students' thinking, it was less clear that this norm led to any systematic exploration of how to use discussions to promote thoughtful classroom practice. Williams' general norm of conducting discussions during small group meetings did not seem to be further supported with other departmental programs.

Teaching teams certainly enhanced collegial interaction at Williams. But they also functioned to inhibit classroom thoughtfulness. Where Carter's integrated curriculum design was associated with a thematic emphasis and intellectual dispositions, Williams' teams focused their curricula on content. Since they had many voices saying what was important, collaborative curriculum development may have encouraged an emphasis on coverage by adding more content to a course's curriculum. One of the teachers at Williams believed that this was the case. Even though there was no pressure to follow the district curriculum guides and there had been explicit messages from in-service training that teachers should give up content coverage, he felt that the team approach added more topics to the curriculum and thereby prohibited him from doing more on those topics he thought were important for students. In short, he believed that teaming was a barrier to promoting students' thinking because "teaming leads to less depth."

Other evidence from Williams supported this claim. The 12th grade social studies teacher, who was not a member of a team, felt little pressure to cover any specific content in his sociology class; hence he included only four unit topics for the semester. Class observation ratings showed that sustained examination of few topics (see Appendix, criterion 1) was a more accurate description of his lessons than the rest of the

department (mean score on scale 1: 4.20 for this teacher, 3.29 for the other teachers observed).

Leadership within the department was generally occupied with administrative tasks, managing the budget, obtaining materials and the like. However, one significant intervention to affect instruction did occur. In order to preserve the integrity of the flex-mod scheduling, both the social studies department chair and the principal felt it necessary to intervene in one grade level team that was tending toward splitting up into traditional patterns: teachers teaching their classes independently of one another with classes meeting for the same time each day with roughly the same number of students. This was indicative of the on-going leadership challange to defend the restructuring at Williams. At times, this involved conflicts with the district administration which affected the character of the teams through involuntary transfers of staff members into and out of Williams. Although attacks on flex-mod have decreased through the years, defending the school continued to be a major concern to leadership. This diminished the opportunities leadership might have had to work with staff to confront some of the problems of the team approach and to develop a more substantive conceptualization of teaching thinking.

To summarize, Williams combined small group classes within flexible-modular scheduling with an emphasis on discussion. The department, and the grade level teams, despite sharing the goal of fostering higher order thinking, lacked more comprehensive programmatic efforts, such as critically examining instruction in small group classes. Hence, while Williams was the top scoring school in the restructured sample, they did not score as high as top schools in the select sample.

Conclusions

Some advocates of restructuring have argued that innovative **organizational structures** will contribute to more thoughtful classroom practices. Based on our research in these four restructured social studies departments, we would suggest that this claim is, by and large, problematic. Although there is overlap among schools in the select and restructured samples (see Table 1 & Figure 1), overall, none of restructured departments scored as high as the mean for the five traditionally organized select departments. It appears that innovative structures are not associated with higher levels of classroom thoughtfulness.

That new structures are insufficient to enhance thoughtful classroom practice in secondary social studies is hardly an extraordinary finding. Common sense might tell one that organizational configurations set certain boundaries but attention must still be paid to the quality of practices within those boundaries. The tremendous concern for transforming specific school **structures** (such as teacher preparation time) in parts of the current restructuring movement, seems to have overlooked the critical importance of organizational programs. The failure to recognize the connections between structures and programs might be due to the general lack of reflection and dialogue about substantive issues of curriculum and pedagogy in US schools (see, e.g., Sizer, 1989). Thus, this analysis is intended, not as an argument against restructuring, but to help refocus the discussion of education change and restructuring onto these key issues.

Unique organizational structures in the four restructured schools included small class size, reduced number of total students per teacher, flexible class lengths, increased

prep time for teachers, increased time for instructional leadership, and opportunities for collegial planning through the creation of teaching teams. From among these organizational features, no structural innovations, in and of themselves, were positively associated with classroom thoughtfulness across all four schools. The four restructured departments did, however, score significantly above the mean of the seven representative departments. Focusing on these four allowed us to gain some insight into the ways in which some specific structural innovations were associated with the variation of classroom thoughtfulness.

In specific contexts, certain organizational structures, if combined with programmatic emphases, did appear to be associated with higher levels of classroom thoughtfulness. For example, small class sizes at Williams seemed to lead teachers to focus their efforts on conducting class discussions. At Carter, small class size and extended class periods appeared to facilitate the implementation of a curriculum which emphasized fundamental questions and thoughtful dispositions. In contrast, at Shaw with little programmatic emphasis, reduced class size was not associated with higher ratings.

Implementing structural innovations, without a clear programmatic focus, can even hinder efforts to improve classroom practice. For example, teaming across departments and increased teacher prep time, such as at Nelson and Shaw, were associated with fragmented and unfocused attempts at improving classroom practice. That is, the collaborative team work in these restructured schools was not really coordinated across teams in ways that contributed to an integrated focus on thinking within social studies classes. When curriculum development was undertaken in teams which coordinated

individual contributions only by including every teachers' special content interests, such as at Williams, teaming tended to perpetuate the emphasis on content coverage, a significant barrier to the promotion of higher order thinking (Onosko, 1991). In contrast to the top three select schools (see King, 1991), we found no programmatic leadership in these restructured departments to bring staff together as a department to pursue common educational goals. Hence, absent organizational programs to promote common goals, we would expect organizaitonal structures for teaming to be inconsequential, at best, or possibly even damaging.

When teaching teams replaced the "department" as a major organizational unit and were combined with programmatic efforts, fragmentation and coverage emphasis did not occur. Teams at Carter generated commitments to the goal of promoting the quality of students' thinking through fundamental curricular questions and a focus on intellectual dispositions. These examples suggest the importance of combining any structural features with programmatic efforts to promote thoughtful classroom practice.

These findings are consistent with previous analyses which indicated the significance of specific programmatic efforts (see Ladwig, 1991, and King, 1991). These efforts fostered a common departmental commitment to, curriculum development focused on, and pedagogy for, thoughtful classroom practice. Combined with this analysis, it seems that specific programmatic efforts are more important to enhancing classroom thoughtfulness than organizational structures. The relative success of the four restructured departments does suggest, however, that innovative organizational structures can function to facilitate the implementation of these programmatic emphases.

Appendix
Minimal Criteria for Classroom Thoughtfulness**

1. There was sustained examination of a few topics rather than superficial coverage of many.

Mastery of higher order challenges requires in-depth study and sustained concentration on a limited number of topics or questions. Lessons that cover a large number of topics give students only a vague familiarity or awareness and, thereby, reduce the possibilities for building the complex knowledge skills and dispositions required to understand a topic.

2. The lesson displayed substantive coherence and continuity.

Intelligent progress on higher order challenges demands systematic inquiry that builds on relevant and accurate substantive knowledge in the field and that works toward the logical development and integration of ideas. In contrast, lessons that teach material as unrelated fragments of knowledge, without pulling them together, undermine such inquiry.

3. Students were given an appropriate amount of time to think, that is, to prepare responses to questions.

Thinking takes time, but often recitation, discussion, and written assignments pressure students to make responses before they have had enough time to reflect. Promoting thoughtfulness, therefore, requires periods of silence where students can ponder the validity of alternative responses, develop more elaborate reasoning, and experience patient reflection.

4. The teacher asked challenging questions and/or structured challenging tasks (given the ability level and preparation of the students).

By our definition higher order thinking occurs only when students are faced with questions or tasks that demand analysis, interpretation, or manipulation of information; that is, non-routine mental work. In short, students must be faced with the challenge of how to use prior knowledge to gain new knowledge, rather than the task of merely retrieving prior knowledge.

5. The teacher was a model of thoughtfulness.

To help students succeed with higher order challenges, teachers themselves must model thoughtfulness as they teach. Of course, a thoughtful teacher would demonstrate many of the behaviors described above, but this scale is intended to capture a cluster of additional characteristics likely to be found in any thoughtful person. Key indicators include showing interest in students' ideas and in alternative approaches to problems; showing how he/she thought through a problem (rather than only the final answer); and acknowledging the difficulty of gaining a definitive understanding of problematic topics.

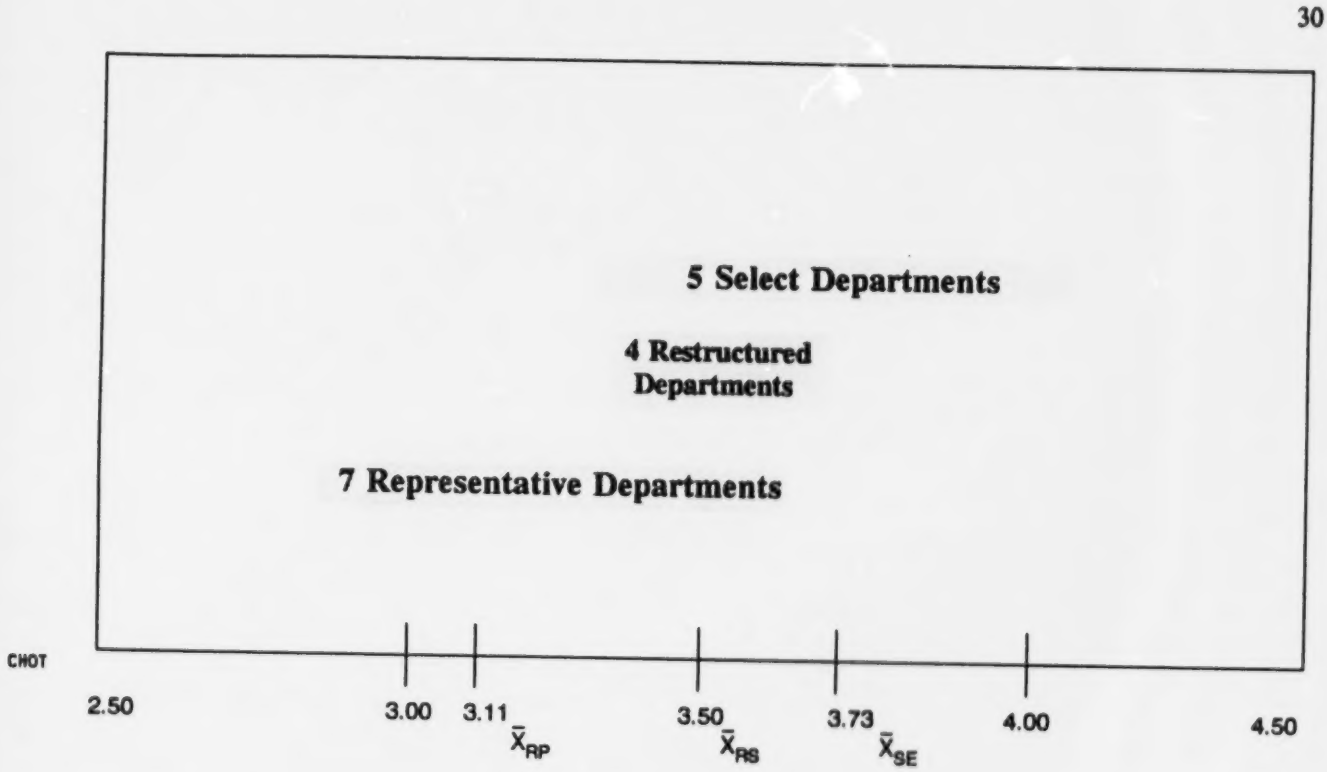
6. Students offered explanations and reasons for their conclusions.

The answers or solutions to higher order challenges are rarely self-evident. Their validity often rests on the quality of explanation or reasons given to support them. Therefore, beyond offering answers, students must also be able to produce explanations and reasons to support their conclusions.

** These six dimensions were rated on a scale of '1' (a very inaccurate description of this lesson) to '5' (a very accurate description of this lesson).

TABLE I
Departmental Mean HOTAV Scores and Standard Deviations According to Sample Set

	Mean	SD
Select Departments (N=90 lessons):		
Grandville	4.05	(.57)
Carlsberg	4.04	(.47)
Arnold	3.85	(.65)
Bradley	3.48	(.75)
Scarborough	3.22	(.56)
All Select Departments	3.73	(.33)
Representative Departments (N=125 lessons):		
Vander Meer	3.63	(.84)
Newcombe	3.35	(.84)
Mathewson	3.13	(.96)
Pierce	2.94	(.83)
Wadsworth	2.93	(.98)
Downing	2.92	(.41)
Erskine	2.88	(.88)
All Representative Departments	3.11	(.26)
Restructured Departments (N=72 lessons):		
Williams	3.72	(.68)
Carter	3.56	(.51)
Nelson	3.36	(.90)
Shaw	3.35	(.78)
All Restructured Departments	3.50	(.15)



$\bar{X}_{RP}$ = mean of 7 representative departments

$\bar{X}_{RS}$ = mean of 4 restructured departments

$\bar{X}_{SE}$ = mean of 5 select departments

Figure 1. Distribution of Departmental Means on Classroom Thoughtfulness (CHOT=1-5)

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NOTES

1. These four departments were included in the last of three phases in the research. In the first two phases, we examined (a) select departments -- those that placed special emphasis on higher order thinking but organized instruction according to typical patterns in the comprehensive U.S. high school; and (b) representative departments -- those that made no special department-wide efforts to promote thinking and were also conventionally organized. See Ladwig (1991) and King (1991) for discussions of the association of organizational features and leadership to classroom thoughtfulness in the overall sample. For further description of the research design, see Newmann (1991).

2. This distinction has been discussed in more detail in Ladwig (1991).

3. The names of the four restructured departments and affiliated organizations are pseudonyms.

4. The extent of small group and individual student work may have corresponded to lower scores on our measures of classroom thoughtfulness. That is, our measures may not have been as sensitive to thoughtful behaviors in these settings as they are in whole class instruction.